

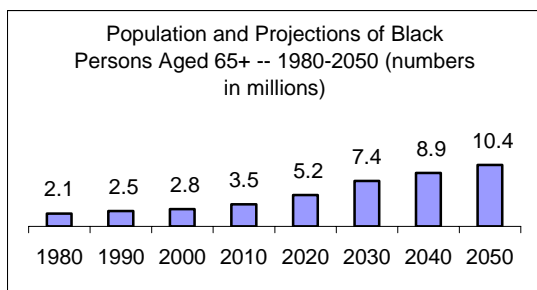


A Statistical Profile of Black Older Americans Aged 65+

Introduction

Almost 37.3 million Americans were aged 65 and over. Three in five people in this age group are women. Over the next forty years, the number of people aged 65 and older is expected to double and the number of people aged 85 and older is expected to triple. Along with general trends for America's population, the African American or Black population is living longer.

The Older Black Population: Past, Present, and Future



The Black or African American older population was 3.1 million in 2006 and is projected to grow to over 10.4 million by 2050. In 2006, African American persons made up 8.3 percent of the older population. By 2050, the percentage of the older population that is African American is projected to account for 12 percent of the older population.

Residence

In 2006, 50% of Black elderly lived in eight states: New York (9.2%), Florida (6.8%), California (6.5%), Texas (6.3%), Georgia (5.9%), Illinois (5.5%), North Carolina (5.4%), Virginia (4.3%).

Educational Level

The past four decades have seen a significant increase in educational attainment among older Americans, including Black older Americans. In 2006 over 55% of the Black population aged 65 and older had finished high school, compared with 1970, when only 9% of Black elderly were high school graduates. Also in 2006, almost 11% of Black older persons had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Nonetheless, there are still educational differences among racial and ethnic groups. In 2006, 75% of all older persons were high school graduates, while in 1970, 27% of all older persons were high school graduates. Also in 2006, 20% of all older persons had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Living Arrangements

In 2006, 52% of older Black men lived with their spouses, 18% lived with other relatives, 4 percent lived with non-relatives, and 26 percent lived alone. For older Black women, 23% lived with their spouses, 34 percent lived with other relatives, 2 percent lived with non-relatives, and 41 percent lived alone.

Income and Poverty

Households containing families headed by Black persons aged 65+ reported a median income in 2006 of \$30,775. The comparable figure for all older households was \$39,649. The median personal income for Black men was \$15,731 and \$11,062 for Black women. The comparable figures for all elderly were \$23,500 for men and \$13,603 for women.

The poverty rate in 2006 for Black elderly (65 and older) was 23% which was more than twice the rate for all elderly (9.4%). Nonetheless, the 23% figure represents a significant decline (from 65% in 1965) in the poverty rate for Black elderly over four decades.

Life Expectancy

Since 1960, life expectancy at age 65 increased by 2.5 years for Black men and 3.5 years for Black women. In 2004, Black males had an average life expectancy at age 65 of an additional 15.2 years (to 80.2 years) and Black women had a life expectancy of 18.6 additional years (to 83.6 years). These figures are 2 years less than the figures for all elderly men and 1.4 years less than the figure for all elderly women.

Self – Rated Health Status Health

In 2005, about 61% of African American older men and 58% of African American older women reported good or excellent health. Among the total 65+ population, this figure was 75% for men and 73% for women. Positive health evaluations decline with age. For example, during 2005, among African American women ages 65-74, 62% reported good or excellent health, compared with 43% among those aged 85 or older.

Chronic Conditions

Most Black older persons have at least one chronic condition and many have multiple conditions. Among the most frequently occurring conditions among Black elderly in 2004-2005 were: hypertension (58%), diagnosed arthritis (46%), all types of heart disease (22%), sinusitis (15%), diabetes (23%), and cancer (12%). The comparable figures for all older persons were: hypertension (48%), diagnosed arthritis (47%), all types of heart disease (29%), sinusitis (14%), diabetes (16%), and cancer (20%).

Access to Medical Care

In 2004, 94% of Black elderly reported that they did have a usual source of care. Only 16% reported (in 2003) that they or a family member was unable to obtain or was delayed in receiving needed medical care.

In 2006, 44% of Black elderly had both Medicare and supplementary private health insurance while 56% of all elderly had both Medicare and supplementary private health insurance. (Source: 2007 Census Current Population Survey/Annual Social and Economic Supplement)

Participation in Older Americans Act (OAA) Programs

In 2006, State and Area Agencies on Aging provided services to a total of 9.5 million persons aged 60 and older. Consistent with the targeting requirements of the OAA, the “aging network” placed considerable emphasis on services to persons with the greatest social and economic need, including members of racial and ethnic minority groups, especially those who are poor. Among the OAA Title III service recipients, 9% were non-Hispanic Black or African American elderly.

The data for this document are taken from a variety of U.S. Government sources with differing sample sizes and designs. These include various releases of the Bureau of the Census, the National Center for Health Statistics, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The last section, Participation in Older Americans Act Programs, reports data collected from State Agencies on Aging about persons served with Older Americans Act funds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

AoA recognizes the importance of making information readily available to consumers, professionals, researchers, and students. Our website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals involved in aging programs and services. For more information about AoA, please contact: U.S. Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, One Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001; phone: (202) 401-4541; fax (202) 357-3560; Email: aoainfo@aoa.gov; or contact our website at: www.aoa.gov